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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7808
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6766
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2301
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1126
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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8155
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4142
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 2701
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 004993

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SUBJECT: NWFP REQUESTS HELP TO SET UP IDP CAMPS

REF: PESHAWAR 748

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) authorities have asked UNHCR and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for assistance in setting up IDP camps for residents fleeing the violence in Swat. The central government has yet to approve the request. Two potential sites have been identified for the camps, although potential numbers are still unknown. At this point, we have no clarity on the number of potentially displaced persons or the duration they might need shelter. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) UNHCR Islamabad confirmed that NWFP Home Secretary Badshah Gul Wazir requested help from UNHCR and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to establish IDP camps for people trying to escape the violence between militant extremists and the Pakistani military in Swat. However, General Farooq of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has yet to agree, so UNHCR cannot proceed. (Note: The same disconnect between the central and provincial levels was also a problem during the early stages of the flood relief efforts this past summer. End Note.) UNHCR said they will do what they can to urge movement on this but emphasized the real pressure on General Farooq and the NDMA must come from the governor and other authorities in NWFP.

¶3. (C) The plan would be to set up two camps. One site is the Meera camp outside Shangla, the neighboring district directly to the southeast of Swat. There was a large IDP camp there following the October 2005 earthquake and the basic elements apparently are still in place. The second proposed site is the Benazir sports complex in Risalpur in Nowshera District, just east of Peshawar District and two districts south of Swat. About a ten minute drive from the highway, the complex is surrounded by a ten foot wall that makes it relatively safe and easy to guard. It can accommodate about 100 families, with space to set up some 500 tents if necessary. Total capacity is estimated at 2,000 to 3,000 persons, plus ample covered space for storage. The five buildings in the center were intended originally as a hospital and have roofs and rooms, but the doors and windows are open and the washrooms lack furnishings. Existing boreholes require renovation and pump fittings for water; electricity must be supplied. UNHCR would focus initially on furnishing the buildings to make them functional; they have

8,000 tents, 35,000 plastic sheets, and a trained local emergency team on stand-by. The PCRS has made arrangements for 300-400 extended family packages, including tents, plastic sheeting, and other non-food items. The Nowshera Health Department would set up a basic health unit on site.

14. (C) At this time UNHCR has little sense of numbers, other than an initial suggestion of about 300 families (roughly 2,000 people). Some families who are fleeing are finding refuge with relatives. It is also unclear how long the IDP camps might be needed. UNHCR confirmed the presence of 3,700 registered Afghans in the Swat valley, but none have come forward to date for assistance and the request to assist with IDPs is currently not an Afghan issue.

15. (C) COMMENT. In spite of UNHCR and PCRS readiness, it is unclear if and when the central government will act on this situation, and it is possible that Islamabad will not support NWFP's request. We are in close contact with UNHCR and will update potential numbers and GOP permission to act as soon as more information is available.
PATTERSON